

"Gentleman's Agreement" Has Its Brave Say at the Palace

By Harry MacArthur

"Gentleman's Agreement" is a distinguished motion picture. It is brave in having something to say about a problem of living today and it is outspoken in the saying of it. It has been directed with rare understanding by Elia Kazan. It is superbly acted by Dorothy McGuire, Gregory Peck, Celeste Holm, John Garfield, Anne Revere and the lesser players. Many of its sequences pack a considerable dramatic wallop.

Producer Darryl F. Zanuck should be prouder, however, of the fact that he had the courage to make it than of the fact that it won the Academy Award as the best motion picture of 1947. It is not the best motion picture of 1947. The new Palace film is, though, one of the finest steps in the right direction Hollywood has taken in many a year and if honors are distributed on that basis it deserves every one it receives.

"Gentleman's Agreement," as you know if you read Laura Z. Hobson's novel of the same name, deals with anti-Semitism and it mines no words in dealing with it. It is brave enough to protest the expressions "like" and "dirty Jew" by admitting that they do exist and letting them get onto the sound track. It is a picture with a message. The message is not a preachment; the message is an integral part of a sequence of dramatic events.

Moss Hart's screenplay for the 20th Century-Fox picture follows closely the story pattern of the book from which it was adapted. His hero is an intense young writer, who is assigned to do a series of articles on anti-Semitism for a magazine. Seeking a new "angle," he comes up with the decision to seek his information first hand, to pose as a Jew himself to see what happens.

What happens startsles and shocks him. He meets anti-Semitism where he never knew it grew before. Immediately, when he tells his girlfriend of his plan, his romance is thrown into a state of tension. "You're not a Jew, are you?" is the first reaction. "Oh, wouldn't you make any difference, of course. But you're not, really, are you?"

The pounding horror of anti-Semitism builds up as the writer learns how it is to be a Jew. He meets anti-Semitism in the Jewish secretary, whose distance is for other kind, the kooky ones. He meets it in the protesting some-of-my-best-friends-are-Jews types. He meets it when his son is tormented by bullies who "won't stay and fight; they just want to run away." He meets it everywhere in outright discrimination and in small, painful darts of insult.

Everywhere, he adds information to the series of articles he has in the work. A learned scientist explains that, as a scientist, he has no religion and anti-Semitism is a Jewish race, therefore he is a Jew only because people call him one. The writer's childhood friend, a Jewish Army officer, returns from overseas and tells him he is a fool for deliberately seeking in the indignities his masquerade is sure to bring on.

"Gentleman's Agreement" piles up an increasing dramatic impact as its hero discovers some of the more brutal facts of anti-Semitism. It becomes increasingly tense as he learns about anti-Semitism on its large scale and sees it wrench from him the girl who claims not to be anti-Semitic, but who accepts it in her friends with calm, who sees no harm in the "gentleman's agreement" to restrict home ownership in a fashionable part of Connecticut.

It is a motion picture with a strong emotional drive. It becomes something less than a perfect example of cinematic art, however, when it works toward a conclusion that seems all too contrived.

In the latter moments of the story, Miss Hobson first and Mr. Hart after have dropped the curtain of inevitability to let themselves be seen pulling strings. The message must be gotten across, so the writer's mother reads it in an excerpt from one of his articles. His Jewish friend must find a house so he can bring his family East and take an offered job, so the writer's girlfriend finally consents to let him have her place in that "restricted" section of Connecticut. This, of course, proves that she is taking up the fight, so the writer rushes to her arms.

The complaint is not that anti-Semitism is not likely to end that abruptly and happily, but rather that the whole climax seems a shade too pat.

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Gregory Peck in "Gentleman's Agreement."

COMING HERE — Director Frank Capra will be in Washington early next month for a special press review of his "State of the Union," screen version of the Russell Crouse-Howard Lindsay play. The film will be shown to the press and Government officials the night of April 7 at the Capitol Theater, the showing to be sponsored by the White House Correspondents' Association. Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn and Van Johnson are starred in "State of the Union."

Red Cross Aide to Speak

Wilfred De St. Aubin, who has just returned from service as director of the American Red Cross assistance program in Hungary, will address the Washington Building Congress at its luncheon meeting at 12:30 p.m. Monday in the Mayflower Hotel. The subject will be "Postwar Life in Central Europe."

AMUSEMENTS

Constitution Hall, Next Tues. Eve., March 30

Billboard "Plan" Features

HOROWITZ

Only Washington Appearance This Season

In Rehearsal—Starts New on Sale

Mrs. Dorsey, 1108 G (Campbell) N.W. 7:15

LAST 2 DAYS!

"Barber of Seville"

STARTS SATURDAY

"A CASE OF MIGHTINGALES"

FIGHT

Tickets Now On Sale

Rocky Graziano-Sonny Horne

Uline Arena—Monday, April 5

Liberty A. C., E. 9178, ME. 8:10

419 9th St. N.W.

AMUSEMENTS

TRANS-LUX

OPENS 10:15 A.M.—SUNDAYS 1 P.M.

SUPER SPORT SHOW

GRAND NATIONAL

STEEPLECHASE

50-101 Shot Wins

Plus Happy U.S. Ticket Holders

4 GREAT RING CLASSICS

The Movies' Academy Award Winners

IN THE NEWSREELS—35

IMPORTANT VISUAL EVENTS

KIDDIES' SHOW EVERY SAT. 10:15

WJAL Newsreels • Last Show 10:45

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Hollywood: Gable to Have Important Support

By Sheila Graham

Robert Taylor will replace Van Johnson in "Monty Stratton," if he okays the script he is now reading. Clark Gable's "Command Decision" will get top treatment in the way of a surrounding cast for Clark. It's an all-male picture and among those penciled in for big roles are Walter Pidgeon, Van Johnson, Robert Walker and John Hodiak. The day when one star could carry a picture by himself seems to be over.

Joseph Cotton and Robert Mitchum can both relax. Each was penciling to play the lead in "The

Harder They Fall," from the Bud Schulberg story. But now the picture has been shelved, at least temporarily. Diana Lynn is up for the best role of her life to play Mrs. Mike in the picture of the best seller for Dick Powell and his independent company. I guess this means Dick was unable to borrow his wife, June Allyson, from Metro.

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